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**Wedding Rings - Through the Ages and for All Eternity**

**By M J Plaster**

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The exact origin of the wedding ring is uncertain and is rife with superstition and mythology. Papyrus dating back to the ancient Egyptian civilization depict wedding rings, and historians credit the land of the Pharaohs with originating this tradition. Engagement or betrothal rings were in use as far back as prehistoric times, but the wedding ring is a relatively new tradition, and unlike the engagement ring, is steeped in religious ritual.

In ancient times, accepting a wedding ring constituted a legally binding agreement between husband and wife. The wife became property of the husband, a holding of sorts. It also represented protection to the wife—a protection against challengers seizing her legal and rightful position in a power grab.

Early Egyptian wedding rings were simple circular bands, crudely crafted from indigenous materials such as hemp and reeds. The lifespan of the average wedding ring was approximately one year. It's a safe bet that the average marriage outlasted the average wedding band, since the eternal circle signified eternal love and devotion. The circle also represented the joining of two halves to create a whole. The hole in the center symbolized the gateway to the unknown—the future. Wedding bands of ivory, leather, and other sturdy materials were crafted by those who desired a more permanent token of eternity.

Metals replaced the earlier hemp and reed wedding bands. The early Romans moved to lead, while other civilizations chose brass and copper. Eventually, gold emerged as the metal of choice. In fact, early Irish couples insisted on gold, as any other material was thought to bring bad luck at best, and constitute an illegal marriage at worst. For couples unable to afford gold wedding bands, gold wedding rings were secured for the service and returned immediately afterward.

Early crude designs were adorned with semiprecious metals in an attempt to disguise the handiwork. The color of the stones also held significance. The red ruby signified the heart, the blue sapphire signified the skies and the heavens, and the rare diamond's indestructible nature signified the

indestructible bond of marriage.

Fit played an equally important role in the realm of superstition surrounding the wedding ring. The fit had to be perfect. Too loose a fit would lead to a sloppy marriage, carelessness, and even cause the couple to grow apart. Too tight a fit would doom the couple to a suffocating, painful marriage.

In ancient times, wedding bands occupied the third finger on the left hand just as they do today. The significance of the third finger was the belief that the vein in the third finger, the "vena amoris," led directly to the heart. This was a thought propagated by the Egyptians and adopted as truth by the ancient Greeks and Romans, until later disproved.

Even after the discovery that there was no vena amoris, the custom of wearing the wedding band on the third finger survived. Early Christian marriages included a ritual that landed the wedding band on the third finger: As the priest recited, "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the holy Ghost," he took

the ring and touched the thumb, the first finger, and then the second finger. When he said, "Amen," he placed the ring on the third finger, sealing the marriage. The wedding band has occupied the third finger into the 21st century, except for a short period during the Elizabethan era, when whimsy decreed that the wedding ring reside on the thumb.

Double-ring ceremonies gained popularity during World War II as young soldiers shipped off to war. The token of the marriage contract took on new sentimentality during those troubling times, and that custom remains intact today. Ceremonies differ, vows are often unique, but the tradition of the wedding band has survived through the ages, and probably will—for all eternity.

M J Plaster is a successful author who provides information on shopping online for

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## **A Peek Into The World Of Chinese Wedding Rings**

**By Burt Cotton**

Wedding is a special celebration which lasts up to a lifetime. And there could not be anything better than a wedding ring which serves as an epitome of commitment, love and trust between the two partners. Since 11th century, the ritual of exchanging wedding rings has been practiced with utmost excitement and passion. And one Asian country vehemently follows this tradition of wedding rings.

Well, you guessed it right; it's none other than China.

As the ritual of exchange of wedding rings is prominent in China, the Chinese wedding rings are also very popular. The land of the mystical dragons and ancient culture blooms with unique styles and designs of wedding rings. In Chinese weddings, the style and the class of the wedding rings play an important role. In fact the jewelers constantly keep on updating the materials and designs of the Chinese wedding rings.

Coming onto the aspect of the materials used in the Chinese wedding rings, there are basically 4 types of material used. These are diamonds, platinum, yellow gold and white gold.

Let us take a peep into how these materials are incorporated in the making of Chinese wedding rings.

### Diamond Wedding Rings

Diamond wedding rings are a very popular choice as Chinese wedding rings. These rings are prominently made up of two types. The first one is a solitaire Chinese wedding ring and the second one is the diamonds Chinese wedding rings. Well, the solitaire Chinese wedding rings consist of a single diamond on the whole of the ring. This diamond is placed on a band which can be made up of any material like platinum, yellow gold or white gold. Moreover one can choose a colored solitaire to make the ring look even more beautiful and charismatic.

The other types of diamond Chinese rings are the ones on which more than one diamond is placed. These rings can have numerous small sized diamonds or three big size diamonds, and various other diamond combinations.

### Platinum Wedding Rings

Platinum Chinese wedding rings are a symbol of class and society. There are several types and styles of platinum Chinese rings. Some of these rings include the sacred symbols of the Chinese cultures. On the other hand, some rings contain some famous and holy quotation, while the other rings have the dragons engraved on them.

If one prefers to have a simple platinum band for a Chinese wedding, he can also buy a plain platinum wedding band to represent the beauty in simplicity. Some Chinese platinum wedding rings can also have the inscribed names of both the partners.

### Yellow Gold Wedding Rings

Yellow gold wedding rings are the most common types of Chinese wedding rings. These rings are

available in different karats according to the gold content used in the making of them. On an average, a Chinese wedding yellow gold ring is made up of 14K gold. This implies that the ring has 58.3 % gold along with 41.7 % of other metals. Another common category of gold Chinese wedding rings is the 18K gold ring wherein the gold content is 75%.

## White Gold Wedding Rings

Well, many people confuse white gold wedding rings with platinum wedding rings. However, white gold wedding rings are yet another popular choice as Chinese wedding rings. These rings are made up of a metal called palladium which is responsible for the white color of the ring.

So which ring have you chosen for your wedding?

Burt Cotton

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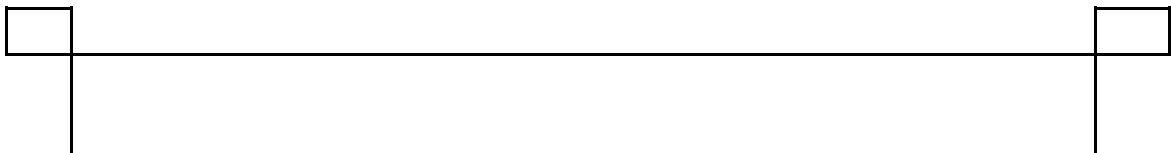
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